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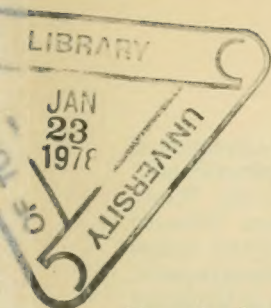
SOME INDIAN CONCEPTIONS OF MUSIC.

BY

MAUD MANN.

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PREFACE.

THE slender outline of the Indian musical system which is given in the following pages might be used as a guide through the intricacies of existing treatises on the subject. The student finds in these much that is contradictory in seeming, and confusing in nomenclature; but I venture to believe that the principles so briefly stated in this paper are, on the contrary, common to the whole of Indian musical art, although the terms employed are sometimes of the North, and sometimes of the South. What we have to remember in our study of Indian music—as, indeed, of any worthy subject—is that it is the *fact* that matters, not the name by which the fact is called, or the convention by which it may be concealed. Thus, for instance, the apparent difference between the system of *mēlas* in the South and that of *rāgas* in the North ceases to be a question of essential import when we see that the *mēla* is only *rāga* resolved into its component tones for purposes of classification and analysis, and that Northern and Southern *rāgas* are equally susceptible to such resolution. Or again, the much-disputed question as to the number of *śrutis* (microtones) becomes to us a matter of entire indifference when we realise that Natural or Just Intonation is common to all Āryan peoples, and that the number of microtonal shades which can be added to septenary scales depends not upon a fixed “law” of the theorist, but upon the capacity of the individual musician to hear and reproduce them. As for the standard by which we can determine what is Natural Intonation and what not—a matter of much recent discussion—the ultimate and only test for artistic as distinct from purely scientific purposes must ever remain the musical ear itself—the sense of true pitch which is common to all who are musically intuitive. Other tests are surely useful, but they are for the laboratory; they follow, but it is obvious that they cannot lead, the artist.

For the benefit of Indian readers who may not be acquainted with recent developments in Western music, I would here explain that this paper was read before members of a body of Western musicians and composers, all of whom are keenly interested in, and some of whom are actually creating, the conditions of modern Western music. My chief aim was to convince them, both by reasoning from their own musical theories seen in the light of Indian theory, and by Indian musical examples, that the most advanced

PREFACE.

musicians of East and West now tend to meet in one common ideal. That ideal has been variously named "programme" music, the "tone-poem," "colour-music," &c., in the West; it is called "*rāga*" and "*tāla*" in India. Modern Western music has many defects. *Rāga* and *tāla* are also by no means complete forms of musical expression. In all modern musical creations of any importance there is, however, a tendency towards change and exchange: change of subject and of materials and methods; and exchange of ideas and of theories between cultures hitherto considered irreconcilable. Thus, under the impetus of common ideals, the boundaries of nations (and, slowly, of races) are being overpassed; and it seems as if in the blending of East and West, ancient and modern, esoteric and exoteric, and in the flights of imagination which result therefrom, we could already hear the first faint notes promising the music of a glad new day.

The modern world needs Tone Poems born of the world-soul; some expression of the Christ spirit, the spirit of love, which has yet to unite the peoples of the earth. There could be no higher ideal for the young musician, whether of East or of West, than to make of himself an instrument upon which that spirit might breathe. But since that artist alone is truly great who can submit himself to the preparatory labour which such an ideal must impose, let us remind ourselves that it is in the patient study of, and sympathy with, the little things in the arts of many nations, that we that will acquire the power whereby to strike fresh chords and free new melodies in the music of the future.

MAUD MANN.

East Horsley,

October, 1913.

SOME INDIAN CONCEPTIONS OF MUSIC.

THERE is a beautiful custom in some parts of India, of invoking the goddess of poetry, eloquence, and music before commencing any study, public or private. And since I am going to try to bring something of India to you this afternoon, I want you for a moment to come with me in imagination to the shrine of *Sarasvati*, whilst I sing this Sanskrit hymn in her honour. The melody is by Mudhusvami Dikshita, a South Indian composer who lived between 1775 and 1835. The words might roughly be translated thus :

PALLAVI (*First part*).

O *Sarasvati*, beautiful and young, with eternal youth, thou who art seated upon a lotus-flower,* work good for us !

ANUPALLAVI (*Second part*).

O thou who art the embodiment of magic speech†—the embodiment of mother-speech—the destroyer of evil—whose plait is so sweet that the bees nestle in it—who holdest *vinā*‡ in thy hand, work good for us !

CHARANAM (*Third part*).

Thy form is like autumnal moonlight, as lovely as the moon herself, O thou who sportest in Kāshmir !

Great Goddess of speech, at whose lotus feet the gods are meditating, ever upon the white lotus art thou seated ! O thou who delightest thy poet's heart, work good for us ! §

[Here followed the hymn.]

I am taking for our study this afternoon a brief survey of some salient features of Indian music. || Each division of our subject contains such a mass of material, that it would be impossible, in taking a general view, to deal fully with any one part. I can therefore only give you the merest indications,

* An emblem of eternity.

† Mantras, or words of power.

‡ Emblem of melody, or, more strictly speaking, of tone as distinct from time.

§ This hymn is in the 31st mode of the Southern Indian system. The name of the *rāga* is *Kalāvati*.

|| I use the term *Indian* instead of "Hindu," to denote the sum total of musical influences which find their home in the land of modern India. But Indian musical theory, it must be remembered, is mainly Hindu ; for strong as are Persian influences, coming through Muhammadan sources, they are not wholly alien to the original Aryan tradition (*vide* H. H. Wilson's "Ariana Antiqua," pp. 121-2).

a brief outline, the several aspects of which I hope at some future time to be able to expand. My object to-day has also been to select those portions of our subject which appear to be of general and immediate value and interest to the Western musician, rather than to deal with more abstruse technical matters, which, fascinating though they are, are more for practical experiment by composers and performers than for exposition in a paper like this.

There are two lines along which we may study Indian music: the *conventional* and the *traditional*. By *conventional* I mean the thing which is done, the thought which is thought, on the authority simply that somebody else has done or thought it. By *traditional* I mean that quality which is inherent, essential; and which may be studied to a great extent independently of passing forms and phenomena. Tradition is discoverable in tendency, not always in result. It does not compel to action or thought just because somebody else has done or thought, although these too may be included in the term. It is stable, conservative, yet ever manifesting in new ways. It is hard to discover, because it eludes us like the spirit of things; yet the beauty of a work of art is measured by its faithfulness to tradition, and hence, if we would grasp the beauty of Indian music, we must study the musical traditions of the people. For purposes of vital art—in fact, for musical purposes—the line of *immemorial tradition*, as it is called in India, is the most fruitful one to pursue; for by its aid we discover that beneath the dead-letter of theorists, buried deep beneath superstitious accretions, plunged in the inertia of age, the stubbornness of ignorance, the darkness of forgetfulness, a great musical art still persists in India to-day.

Now the majority of Indian musicians, and the majority of writers on Indian music, Eastern and Western, are inclined to study rather the conventional than the traditional aspects of the art. Convention, as we all know, is a corpse. Hence, some critics are not wrong, from their point of view, when, regarding this corpse of Indian music, they say: "The art may have existed in the past, but it is dead now. What we find has no practical bearing on modern art production. India points us backward to her past, but we find no art of music in her present." I submit, however, that such critics are unaware of the existence of an Indian musical tradition, in the sense in which I have here defined the term, and that the attitude in which they approach the study is not likely to help them to discover it. From an archæological point of view their work is certainly admirable; but we musicians ask for more than that. We want living art. We cannot find it in the mere records—however scholarly and, in their own way, valuable—of dead or dying conventions.

It is perhaps natural that, confronted by the "ocean of Indian music," as it has been called, most investigators should not sense the inner life of the art, which, we must remember, Indians themselves have well-nigh lost. But it is not therefore right that we or they should conclude that it does not exist. Suppose for the moment we admit that a generation or two ago the Pandits had lost hold on much of their sacred literary tradition, would this be sufficient to prove that the inner meaning was not there? For some time past Western as well as Eastern Sanskrit scholars have laboured to establish the contrary. The same may be done in regard to Indian musical tradition also.

At the outset, however, we are faced with a difficulty, which students of literature and of the other arts scarcely encounter. The bulk of Indian music, both art and folk, has been orally transmitted for ages. It is thought over here that only folk-music can thus be handed down, traditional oral transmission, applied to music, generally meaning with us that it is not distinctively "art." But it is otherwise in the East. Difference of race, difference of temperament, the peculiar exigencies of Eastern music itself, make its complete record in notation a fruitless task, excepting for occasional purposes of study and analysis. Hence there are only a few scattered systems of notation, which are clumsy and, from our point of view, inadequate, and we are mainly dependent on the disciple for an account of his master's work. If the disciple fails us we lose that work. Take, for instance, the case of Tyāgarajāyya. There is little doubt that he was one of the supreme masters of music, but the modern records of his compositions, both written and oral, are, *ipso facto*, not enough to establish his authority. If disciples and notation fail us, how then can we establish it? In a case like this—and there are many—we can form a pretty clear estimate of the worth of the composer by working from the criteria afforded by existing tradition, and by reading the notational records in the light of our knowledge of musical *facts* of which these meagre records will then furnish clear landmarks. Fortunately, these facts are still to be discovered in modern India, and traditional conservatism makes our task easier, too. In Western music, such a method of recovery would be impossible. If we had the faculty of memory developed to the degree in which it is found even still in India, and if Beethoven had not written down his music, how much of it could we render accurately to-day? Very little, for the simple reason that Beethoven used no traditional *ragas* and *tālas*—at any rate not named and recognisable by his fellow-musicians—to guide us through his labyrinth. You will, perhaps, say that Beethoven is in any case more complex than a man like Tyāgarajāyya, and that the two systems cannot therefore

be compared. To this I would reply, that if we put aside the majority, even, of the current stories of Tyāgarajāyya, and if we analyse the mere surviving skeletons of his songs in the manner which I have just indicated, we still feel ourselves in the presence of a giant. If added to this we consider the microtonal and rhythmic complexity of modern and comparatively inferior Indian utterances, we cannot be certain that his were not in their way as complex as Beethoven's—as complex, that is, in point for point of Indian traditional usage, compared point for point with Beethoven's treatment of Western materials; always bearing in mind that the outlined record of *rāga* and *tāla*, apart from the record of subsidiary matters, is in itself an important clue to the whole of Indian musical analysis, a matter which it would take me too far from our subject to deal with adequately here. In judging the old Indian composers, one thing we can declare with certainty—that is, that enthusiasm for the study of music has been until recently on the wane in India, and that most of the finest works have therefore suffered. Of the productions of India's greatest saints and composers—men like Haridās and Tānsēna, Sūr Dās and Kabir, and many others, only the merest outlines remain, and these will always be incomprehensible so long as strictly Western methods of analysis are applied to them.

What, then, are the materials by which we may establish the fact that music is still a living art in India? Not the conventionalisms, if I may use the term, of the mass of Indian musicians; not their disputes over the authenticity of this note or that note of a *rāga*; not the woeful attempts to copy brass bands and missionary hymns which we hear in most Indian schools and households to-day; not the modern Indian music-schools, wherein the pupils are carefully trained out of their capacities for natural intonation, and their tonal ideas are stifled by tempered pitch on screeching harmoniums; not even the songs of the old composers, if they are taken only on the evidence, *ipso facto*, of the remaining records. We must look for our materials in an analysis of existing records according to Indian methods; in the beautiful utterances of a few rare living artists; above all, in the traditional beliefs about music which linger with passionate persistence in the very heart of the people, which influence all worthy modern developments, and which find occasional outlet in the all-night musical ecstasies of devotees in the temples or on the roadways; and in the inexpressibly lovely songs of the folk, which, by their rhythmitonal complexity, far in advance of ours—that is a point to note—suggest the remains of a noble art, rather than the spontaneous expression

I have had to coin this word to express the *śrutis*. "Quarter tone" is a misnomer, since thirds of tones are found, and perhaps fifths also.

of untutored natures. If we have heard these artists, these devotees, and these folk of India, and heard them at their best, we must be convinced that the East can speak to us in music, as it has spoken in philosophy, in poetry, and in religion. But they are difficult to hear. Only sympathy will unlock the barriers between the musicians of the West and the East.

The traditional Indian beliefs about music are not mere fanciful dreams. They are living, vital, and real. Most Western investigators, and some modern Indians, have set them aside as nebulous and without practical value in art. To do this is totally to misinterpret the Indian viewpoint; for religious beliefs underly even the technical methods of the Hindu (which have been adopted, of course, by his Muhammadan brothers),* reveal the purpose and object of his works, and explain his otherwise inexplicable peculiarities and mannerisms. A brief outline of some fundamental aspects of these beliefs must here suffice.

In the Hindu Trinity, Shiva, the almighty destroyer and regenerator, is, in one of his aspects, the father of all sound, the power of the Word. His *Shakti*, or co-equal feminine nature, Gauri, is, in one of her aspects, the mystic embodiment, the "sound-in-itself," of the Word. The feminine aspect of Shiva is the universal prototype of *tune*; Shiva himself, of those time-patterns, or forms, which, together with tune, constitute phrase-sections. Vishnu and his consort are, in their musical aspects, *stanza* and *form* generally (unfolding from rhythmic forms), and melody (unfolding from tune). The goddess Sarasvati, daughter of Brahma, is the primal embodiment of the Word in the innermost nature of things: the embodiment of those primal sound-idioms out of which all subsequent tunes and melodies are built. Each being, each object, has its own special inner mystic sound or name, triple in nature. The totality of these are also exoterically called Sarasvati, the Word incarnated, "the music of the spheres." She is the personification of sound, the first differentiation of universal sound, worshipped, by students especially, in the form of a chaste and beautiful goddess.† The nature of music reflects the destroying and regenerating nature of Shiva-Gauri; for music, like Shiva, destroys our lesser selves, so that from their ashes may arise the greater, regenerated.‡ Hence Shiva-Gauri is especially regarded as the supreme object of devotion for the musician. Shiva becomes, exoterically, basic *rhythm*, or *proportion* in music.

* See footnote §, p. 1.

† Compare Greek ideas about music in the training of the young.

‡ This of course is true of music regarded from the modern scientific standpoint: sound-vibrations, if sufficiently strong, being at once destructive of the non-harmonious, and harmoniously constructive.

The basic numerical values out of which kosmos is built (in one aspect the time-values out of which rhythm unfolds), are given by Brahma, the First Person in order of manifestation of the Trinity. Shiva creates rhythms by bringing about the juxtaposition of these values. All life is a dance, a play, the *līlā*, and Shiva is the centre of the play, and is popularly represented dancing and beating on his little drum called *damaru*, else all would be chaos. The original time-idioms given by Brahma must be considered as elemental, primal, simple. When manifested through Shiva, they take form, complexity. This form or structure is popularly called *tāla*; but *tāla* in the generic sense is really threefold: it consists of value, idiom (Brahma); rhythm, the phrase built from value (Shiva); and stanza, musical structure built from the juxtaposition of phrases or time-proportions (Vishnu).

The same triplicity occurs in sound, which is popularly called *rāga*, in one only of its aspects—tune—but really consists of tonal idiom; tune (juxtaposition of idioms); and melody (juxtaposition of theme-sections, &c.). *Rāga*, in the general sense just alluded to, is really thought of as being feminine. Most *rāgas* are, as a matter of fact, classified as *rāgiṇī*, the suffix *īṇī* being feminine. The goddess Sarasvati carries the *vinā*, which is the instrument *par excellence* of tone as distinguished from time. The pictorial representations of feminine tone-patterns or *rāgiṇī* are innumerable. When we consider that these tone-patterns may be studied and used in free improvisation, quite apart from time-patterns, we see how clearly the Hindu associates *rāga* with the feminine aspect of creation. *Tāla* is strength, and *rāg(īṇī)* is grace, and all the complexities of music can only be manifested through their union.*

It is chiefly in music, according to Hindu tradition, that the sages have revealed their communings with the Divine. Hence to be a true musician is to follow a high calling. Wherever the old belief in the holy mission of the musician has waned, music has fallen into disrepute. The *rishi* Nārada wandered on the banks of Gangajī with his *vinā*, steeped in the melodies of the seven spheres. The true musician will follow in his footsteps. No prayer is complete without music in one form or another. The child is to be taught through music; even grammar is learned in chanted poetry—indeed, so ingrained is this feeling, that in the more prosaic modern surroundings we find Indian youths still endeavouring to read newspaper sporting columns aloud with a kind of

* This musical theology, to which but brief allusion can here be made, is indicated throughout Hindu mythology and tradition; but, apparently, without sequence, and without the practical application which, upon studying it, becomes so clear to the modern musical analyst.

rhythmic intonation! Among the most sacred Hindu books, the Gāndhārva Veda is the Veda of those beings whose special function it is to make music. The heaven regions abound in nymphs or *apsaras*, who dance to the music of the Gāndhārvas. And all these beings mean more than legend to the Hindu musician, as we shall presently see. Who could think of the young Krishna without the flute which wrought miracles whenever He played upon it? A whole song-tradition has developed in the Krishna country of Brijā Bhasha about Krishna and His beloved Rādhā. (I must not stop to sing a beautiful example in *rāga* Nātachayā which here comes to my mind, or I shall not have time to finish even this rough general outline of our subject.)

The most persistent and widespread of all Indian musical traditions is perhaps that of the power and *entity* of *rāga* (with *rāga* I of course include *rāginī*). No true Indian artist could doubt the miraculous powers of the *rāgas*. Have they not cured the sick and brought rain in times of drought, or lit temple lamps, and tamed wild beasts, and wrought many wonders beside? Every true musician must have convinced himself of the power of *rāga*. The *rāga*, as you know, is popularly regarded as simply a tone-form, that is, an arrangement of notes in which improvisations may be cast entirely irrespective of time; and these tone-forms are numbered, it is said, by thousands. (We must bear in mind the popular distinction between "tune" and "melody," a vague reflection of the triplicity already alluded to. The Indian will always inquire: "In what tune are you going to sing this melody?" just as we might say, "What are going to be the prevailing harmonies in which you are about to play?"—his meaning being: "In what arrangement of tones, *considered irrespective of time*, will you perform?")

But to the Indian mind the word *rāga* conveys also more than a mere arrangement of notes. The whole of nature is alive, ensouled, pulsating with purpose and being, and music, most living of all, forms a great peopled world of its own in the inner spheres, for which the musician is simply the channel to the outer. This is the immediate ground-work on which the whole Indian technical method is based; and that method cannot be studied, and will yield no fruit, apart from it. The *rāgas* and *rāginīs* are not mere names. They are real beings, living in the subtler worlds, and they cannot manifest on earth unless they are properly invoked, that is, unless the arrangements of notes to which they lend their names are duly performed. Hence the care with which the Indian musician enunciates its *rāga* before he begins a song, and his displeasure if he hears someone putting in what is, to him, a wrong note. Allowing for exaggerations and superstitions of all kinds, we

still find many *ragas* which produce distinct and peculiar psycho-physiological effects.*

The principles of *rāga*—and also, as we shall see, of *tāla*—may indeed be the “missing links” for which we have been searching in the latest developments of programme-music,—and searching, as yet, largely in vain. To my mind, at least, *raga* and *tala* have the very spirit and power of “programme” in them, for they produce the atmosphere which is sought for, but usually lacking, in the quite modern Western programme-music. I have heard a well-played *rāga* produce, with exquisite economy of material and means, results to which many a tone-poem, with all the elaboration of modern harmony and of the modern band, can scarcely attain. Many of the *ragas* and *tālas* have an undefinable but appreciable power, *entity*, even to Western ears. They sound, indeed, more “modern” than anything of that “school” which one has heard in the West, and one feels, moreover, that, handled by Western musicians, they could not possibly sound alien. And this last would only be natural, since the basis of our own culture is mainly Āryan. *Rāga* and *tala* do not express ideas-about-things, as do our classics; nor extraneous things-in-themselves, as our Strausses and Debussys seek to do; but rather *musical* things-in-themselves: they are not the musical embodiments of pistol shots, and ticking clocks, and bleating sheep, and so forth, but of nature-spirits, fairies, elves, entities, some of whose habitations are, according to Indian theory and vital belief, the various forms of music.

I do not, of course, intend to disparage our modern music, and it is clear that on many points modern India has much to learn from the West. I do, however, wish to lay before you the fact that, in spite of some Indians having turned away from their own finest traditions, material still exists in India which must influence our compositions—if we study it sympathetically—as naturally and as inevitably as Sanskrit literature has influenced our writings. A study of the principles of *raga* and *tala* would result in an influx of new ideas and new materials to the West. For Indian music is purely “programme,” and it has been so for ages. The Hindu conception of the materials of music, as having a real and individual existence in the subtler regions of life, has been developed in his system as far as it will go, and truly he seems now to have created an inner world of music, for the perfecting of which the Western outer

* Absurd as this statement may sound, I make it in all seriousness, and go even so far as to claim that for those who are interested in the investigation of psychic phenomena, the *rāga* opens up a new field. The superphysical forms of the *ragas* are of course believed in among all Hindus who have not been too much affected by Western materialism, but patient experiment will reveal them to anyone who will take the necessary trouble.

world, with its marvellous technical possibilities, is indispensable. Our chief developments, on the contrary, have until recently been in other directions; but there are clear indications that modern musicians are approaching the East.* The problem of how the two worlds will ultimately unite is one which can, of course, only be solved along lines of practical experiment.

Time or *tala* proves on analysis not to differ essentially, as would at first appear, from our time. Here again there is a vital point of contact, and the root of the two cultures seems to be identical. We count by the time-unit, in divisions which are all equal to one another; in India the unit, or *matra*, also is recognised, and used mainly for analytical purposes and filling-in stuff for drumming; but it is the phrase-beat or pulse by which the Indian musician usually counts. To him each kind of pulse is, as it were, the reflection of a step in the Cosmic *lila*. It must be dwelt upon and oft repeated, until the ecstasy of the *lila* breaks upon the devotee. So important is this last idea, that rhythmic outlines, each composed of several kinds of pulse, are developed as an art by themselves—that is, quite apart from tune. These outlines are provided by the *talas*, of which there are endless varieties.† Now we must not confuse the art of *tala* with the mere tom-tommings of primitive peoples and of the lower orders in India; for when we have heard a really fine Indian drum solo, we cannot any longer feel that time, as an art by itself, is barbarous. I always used to think it was, until a Madrasi drummer convinced me of the contrary. I only wish he were here now, when he would surely convince you too.

Tala is indicated by drumming, and by hand-motions. The percussive art is carried to such perfection that it is not a mere rapping and beating noise as, to Indian ears, ours seems to be. It is by turns thuds, and sobs, and insinuating rhythms, and wild orgies—anything that the artist wishes to make of it, in fact. It fills up all the gaps in melodies; it holds the players together; it fights and fumes, or praises and glories, or prays and aspires, bringing them at last—if the subject be an exalted one—to the state of consciousness in which ordinary terrestrial values have no existence. No Indian music, in fact, is complete without *tala*, and no *tala*, without the drums.

I will give you some *tala* outlines—mere outlines, for to play *tabla*‡ takes lifelong practice.

* See, for instance, articles by Reginald de Koven in the *North American Review*, November, 1907, on "The Modern Revolt in Music"; Professor Granville Bantock in the *Manchester Guardian*, September 18th, 1913, M. Louis Laloy "La Musique Chinoise."

† Needless to say that the *talas* are usually allied with tune, but they can also be studied as a separate art.

‡ A variety of Indian drum, consisting of a pair.

[Taking up the drums, Mrs. Mann said:]

These drums have, when in order, a variety of tone-colours. I cannot find anyone in London to put them in order for me, but still, I will do what I can with them! The nature of the large one may be described as positive, that of the small one as negative; in other words, Mr. and Mrs. Drum—that is, of course, according to the strictly *exoteric* Eastern idea! These instruments are usually described by two names, one masculine and one feminine, and the names differ in most provinces. There are several qualities of tone in each—clear, cloudy, and strident. Indian drums are well worth study by Western composers, and would provide them with an entirely new and varied range of tonal colour. The various kinds of accents, syncopations, and so on, are given by different kinds of thuds—*i.e.*, the quality of each thud expresses the nature of the accent, and the different kinds of accents are innumerable. All this, of course, I cannot demonstrate to you. Even silence is expressed by a peculiar movement of the whole left hand on “Mrs. Drum,” called *khali*, the effect of which is thrilling and absolutely unique. The fingers and palms—not sticks—are used for playing, and every gradation of force is employed, from *molto pianissimo* to *fortissimo*. There are many kinds of drum besides these, several of which possess delicious subtleties of tone, but the *tabla* are oftenest employed to accompany singers.

Here are several *talas*—just the main outlines, without tonal variety or embellishment*:

Rudratāla :

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20

I have heard servant-boys beating *tālas* like this! When we consider that twenty units form the “bar,” and observe the complex distribution of the accents, and that it is a matter of practice, not mere theory, we cannot call such rhythms “barbarous tom-tomming.” The length of the “bar” is alone sufficient indication of its advanced stage in rhythmic evolution.

* Meaning of signs: ——— strong pulse; — weak pulse. The numbers refer to the number of *mātrās*, or equal divisions of time, in a “bar.” Each of these examples represents one “bar.” O represents the “closed,” empty, *khali* effect, which continues to the end of dots. The perpendicular line is a weak *udari*. When conducting, the singer usually expresses these accents as follows: ——— right hand clapped (with or without noise) on left. — A finger of right hand tapped gently on the left palm. He begins by the little finger, and works on to the first, one finger to each beat; then, if necessary, back to the little finger. In *Jhampa tāla*, for instance, at O the fingering would be: 4, 3, 2, 1, 4, 3. | indicates the right hand thrown out from the left palm into the air. *Khali* is usually indicated in conducting by a noiseless, persuasive pressure of the right on the left palm.

Here is another, a variety of the *tāla* called

Brahma :

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15	

Another—

Jhampa Tala (South Indian) :

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
	O	

Another form of the same :

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
						O			

The following melody is sung with this last swinging “hypnotising” rhythm playing through it.

[Example given, portion of a South Indian Song,
“*Parithānam*.”]

One of the most beautiful is a *tāla* with seven *mātrās*, in a folk-song in the scale *Māya Mālava Gauḷa*, to the words *Sankara Sambhu Shiva*. (Please remember that I am only giving you the bare outlines of these *tālas*. It would need an expert at drumming to give you the complex details and tonal colouring.) The time-pattern used for this song conveys its own atmosphere of peace and blessing. [Example given.]

There are hundreds of these time-patterns, and most of them are beautiful. Each has its special emotional significance, and the great point to remember is that most must be tasted long to be enjoyed. The monotony of *tāla* may of course be overdone; and here is where Western influences would act as a corrective. On the other hand, to the Indian mind our system of ever-changing accents is too restless to create “atmosphere,” excepting perhaps that of struggle. There is some truth in this, too, if we study our rhythm from the standpoint of the East. Its beauty is often the beauty of anguish.

My attention was first drawn to the underlying unity between our ideas of time and the Indian conception of *tāla*, when analysing the time outlines of Western compositions. I observed that it was usually best done by means of *tāla*. Some of the most popular and ancient *tālas*, in fact, are carried out beat for beat in our classics; so that a knowledge of *tāla* might become a key to accent in Western phrasing. One example must here suffice: the opening theme of the Adagio from Beethoven’s Pianoforte and Violin Sonata, Op. 30, No. 1; but many others are scattered through our classics. (Indeed, if one begins experimenting with the *tālas* in Western time-analysis, one discovers identity of structure everywhere.) The Adagio, as you will remember, is in common time. In phrasing it according to its *tāla*, we would make

two bars of four beats each into *one* of eight beats—in other words, four phrase-sections instead of eight bars. Beethoven, in fact, has done this, although he has written in the conventional bar-lines for common time. *The four sections would be exactly equivalent to four adi-talas.* I will beat them to you:

Tāla adi.

* *Adagio cantabile.*

Adagio cantabile.

p *cres.*

sf *p*

khali. *O* *p* *cres.*

Even the *sforzando*, which Beethoven has marked in this phrase, falls on the climax of the *tāla* called *sam*! So complete is the likeness between the phrase-feeling of the great master and that of ancient India, that the *khali* of this *tāla* is also in strict accord with Beethoven's feeling. If I had time, I would give you more complex examples. I can only remark here, in passing, that *adi-tāla* and *rupaka-tāla*

* *x* means pulses, both in the *tāla* and in Beethoven's rhythm—main and subsidiary. *V* is *sam*, the chief accent in a phrase or stanza, and an important part of *tāla*. A comparison of the following *tāla* with the example will show how perfect is the identity. *Adi-tāla*

The long bar-lines indicate *tālas* completed

(*rupaka* is — — — — — ; it should be remembered that the *tala* may begin on any of these beats, thus making varieties of pattern in each *tāla*) are most commonly found in our classics. More complex *talas*, equally common in India, we do not find so perfectly worked out here, though their presence may be discovered also. East and West meet, absolutely and literally, in many of our classics, in every detail of accent and phrasing.

One question arises out of the study of *tala* : since many *talas* can be shown to be a synthetic enunciation of the principles of time-phrasing, were the *talas* given—revealed—by the *Rishis* and sages of old, as *Hindus* claim, or were they evolved in the far past as we have evolved our rhythms? If evolved, then the artists who made them must have been very great indeed. The modern world cannot show that it has evolved anything intrinsically better, for the finest rhythmic things we have done are usually vindications of *tala* principles. True, we have added our own contributions to these basic Aryan conceptions of rhythm; but whilst many have remained unelaborated in India, many more have remained undiscovered in Europe, and against our modern experiments in rhythm—I use “modern” in the sense of the last five-hundred years—we have to place a theory perfect and complete in smallest detail and as *living* in India still, in its entirety, as the example I have just given is in the work of a modern master. Whence this science?*

In teaching a musical phrase, the Indian does not bother about the units of time (*matras*) which do not fall on its pulses.† He teaches the pulses first, and lets the pupil question about the units afterwards, taking advantage of the inborn sense of rhythmic “swing” or pattern, to impress the principles of phrasing. This method greatly simplifies phrasing; for it is much easier to hang a phrase on to a time-pattern which is already grasped, than to count it out in small, equal beats, and look for the time-pattern afterwards! One can of course always make a new *tāla* to suit one's need—as the great poet-musician Rabindranath Tagore has done: so that *tala* is not rigid, as it may at first appear. The Indian composer decides—nowadays generally unconsciously—upon the main accentual swing of his work, and builds his *tāla* thereupon. Many object to any departure from conventional *tala*. But the principle, the living tradition

* I cannot agree with Captain Day's statement (“The Music of Southern India,” p. 10) that “the theoretical part of Hindu music when compared with that of Europe is naturally very simple, as it treats entirely of simple melody and measure.” Anyone who himself tries to produce *rāga* and *tāla* according to Hindu theoretical standards must at once discover the complexity of the art.

† The pulses fall on the horizontal strokes. There would be three in *adi*, and two in *rupaka tāla*, and so on.

of *tāla*, demands no rigid adherence to a stereotyped pulse. The tradition enjoins only keeping to a pulse when it is found, and even that, only until its emotional end has been attained.

It is the teaching of time-patterns instead of metronome ticks to Indian children which has helped them to gain their extraordinary control of rhythm. It is a great pity that we are now trying to tie them down to metronomes and other machines. Musicians of all countries might surely unite in protest against the disgraceful exploitation of Eastern cultures in mere commercial enterprise.

The arts of dancing and gesticulation are included under the general Sanskrit name for music, *sangita*. Motion is part of music, as light of the sun. Every good musician is therefore expected to be a conductor. He only conducts a few people, certainly, but he puts into that work enough art to direct a band. The art of conducting is, in fact, carried to great perfection. Force and expressiveness, combined with economy of movement, are found in the *mudras*, or hand-postures, by which various psychological states are definitely symbolized. This art is not only acquired by singers and nautch-girls. I have seen amateurs exercising it unconsciously. One asks oneself how an art of conducting could have become so ingrained as to be sub-conscious, without ages of practice of some kind, unless indeed it was given to the people by their Rishis and teachers, as tradition tells. One would like to see Western conductors using the *mudras*, and teaching modern Indians in turn to put their powers to wider uses in the orchestra and choir. Why should we not have some adaptation of the *mudras* in our conducting, since Aryan culture, as we know, is not alien to our race? The *mudras* are, in fact, no more alien to our system of conducting than are the *talas* to our principles of rhythm. It can be shown that *tala* is very modern; why not the ways of expressing it also? The *mudras*, moreover, are very beautiful.

Coming now to mode: we find mode developed instead of key. Mode being stronger and more atmospheric than key, it is not changed so often. The Indian artist will play in the same mode and on the same key-note for hours, until he and his listeners are fully under its spell.* The mode or

* It is true that modern musicians often exaggerate this concentration and deaden, rather than enthrall, their listeners. But before sweeping aside as monotonous the system which they profess to represent, we have to ascertain whether monotony is really part of that system, or is due to inertia and convention. I have not as yet come across any dogmatic assertion in any authority on Hindu music as to the necessity for remaining in one *rāga* until everyone is tired of it. On the contrary, according to the noblest traditions of the art, the musician is expected always to know the psychological moment at which to change his *rāga*, and this I have heard accomplished on several occasions with fine result. Studied from the deeper traditional viewpoint, then, *rāga* becomes as free as key, though it is inevitable that it should not as a rule be changed as often as the latter, since the genius of mode does not demand it.

mēlakarta is the complete septenary scale, and as many as seventy-two *mēlakartas* are recognised in Southern India. But, as our knowledge of scale-evolution would lead us to expect, the *mēlakarta* is found only in comparatively modern classifications—a matter of convenience for the student of *rāga*, rather than of natural musical law. According to the Southern theory, *rāgas* are derived from *mēlakartas*, and for practical purposes this theory works well enough, though we know that it puts the cart before the horse, since “tune” is the parent of the scale. Tonic and dominant are fixed, like ours, in the *mēlas*. In the first thirty-six the subdominant is \sharp , and in the last thirty-six it is \flat . Here is an example of a *mēla* and of a *rāga* “derived” from it :

Mēla Māya Mālava Gaula (15th Mode). (Note the signature. Keynote is C.)



Rāga Lalita, “derived” from this mode. Dominant omitted.



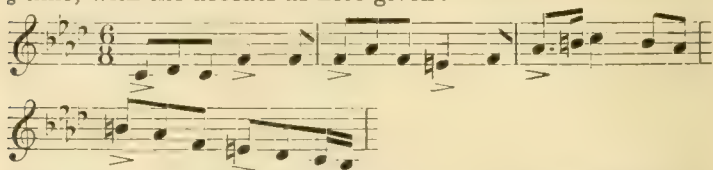
As in the system of *tāla*, so also in *rāga* we find immense variety of treatment, in spite of the apparent rigidity of form. There are hundreds of different *rāgas*: many *rāgas* are classified under each *mēla*. The system is as fully developed as is ours in harmony, and, like that of *tāla*, susceptible of ever new and fresh treatment.

You will recognise the idioms of the above *rāga* in this *kṛiti* “*Sitamma Māyamma*,” a devotional song by Tyāgarajāyya in *tāla Rupaka*.

[Example given.]

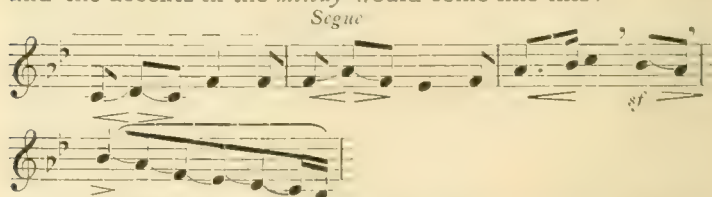
It is of the utmost importance to study the outline of a *rāga* carefully before singing it. If we render Indian songs according to preconceived Western ideas of melodic outline, we are almost certain to hear nothing in them. We miss the peculiarities of the *rāga*, and so miss all. That is why it is necessary to write them down, not as *translations* into the Western language of music, but exactly as we hear them. In “*Sitamma Māyamma*,” for example, we would

probably write the first phrase in the key of F minor, in $\frac{6}{8}$ time, with the accents as here given:



Rendered thus, the "atmosphere" of the *rāga* and *tāla* is destroyed. The idiom of the *rāga* is completely obliterated. Most Indian melodies have hitherto been thus mutilated in our notation. To bring out the peculiarities of the *rāga*, we should write or sing it with the accents differently distributed. Its accents occur *off* the time-pulse much more frequently than do ours. The main business of the singer is to look after the *rāga*-outline, which includes the accentual scheme of tone as distinct from that of time. It is the drummer who reminds the listener of the *time*-outline, and by this device, simple as it seems, the full beauty of each is developed to the uttermost, and the total effect is certainly not one of a primitive art. The *tālas* and *rāgas* are, in fact, much too complex in themselves to be combined in any other way—with rare exceptions, which are provided for in this ocean of musical science. The difference of accentual treatment between the *rāga* and the *tāla* is one of the salient points in the Hindu system, and very apt to be misunderstood. It lends concentration and strength to even slender materials.

Returning to the example just given, we would, then, hear this song, not in the key of F minor, but in a mode built upon the tonic C, and not in $\frac{6}{8}$ time, but in *tāla-rupaka* (4 + 2, *vide* p. 13), and the accents in the *melody* would come like this: *



The finest Western examples of this cross-accent between rhythmic and melodic outline are perhaps found in Brahms.

Studies for the various *ragas*, called *sargam* in Northern India, and *tanam* in the South, are handed down from generation to generation. Here is one for *rāga* Aiman Kalyan.

[Example given.]

* Compare the accents and expression marks in this example with the outline of the *rāga* itself, p. 13.

Another for *rāga Khamāc* :

[Example given.]

These are, as it were, the "figured-bass" exercises of the Indian student.

Instrumental technique is helped by language; the various instruments and fingerings having their special "dialects" and syllables. This is a great help to beginners, who learn fingering by ear more than by eye, thus getting extra training for the organ most needed in the pursuit of their art. The systems of technique by language are very ancient and numerous, scattered throughout the country.

[Mrs. Mann here gave some examples of the "language" of drum-fingering.]

The microtones do not really belong to the scheme of modes at all. The great antiquity of the *vinā*, the arrangement of the frets of which is in semitones, seems to carry out the belief held by modern Indian musicians that the *śrūtis*, in so far as they are not the main notes of a mode, have always been treated as graces, and not as belonging to modes or *rāgas* proper.* Our ordinary just intonation is what is used in the modes, with some few exceptions, which, when not due to pitch-freedom of purely melodic *rāgas*,† are more the result of ignorant conventions than anything else. The best modern musicians work in just intonation—with the exceptions alluded to—unless where the introduction of Western keyed instruments has ruined their sense of pitch, a musical devastation which is proceeding rapidly in modern India. All my own observations go to show that however far they may wander from just intonation when singing without accompaniment, they invariably attain it in concerted music. Here also the best artists of India and Europe are at one. Occasionally, again, one may hear a microtone in place of a parent- or modal-note, where the microtone, which is really only an embellishment, has been so much dwelt upon as to have obliterated the memory of its parent-note altogether. But generally speaking, microtones are grouped about the notes of the mode as graces, and after a little ear-training they can be distinguished as notes subsidiary to the mode.

* See, for instance, A. M. Chinnaswami Mudaliyar, "Oriental Music," pp. 12, XII., 13, 32. "No quarter-tones exist, as such, in the Dravidian scheme of *mēlas* or modes." "Academy of the Divine Art" by the same author.

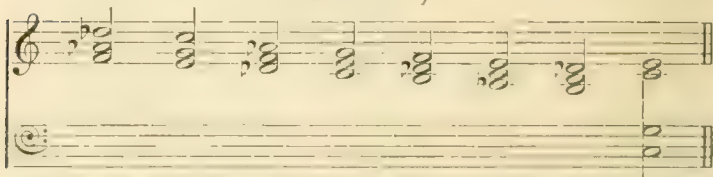
† *Rāgas* which it would be impossible to harmonise. *Rāgas* may be conveniently classified under "Harmonic" and "Melodic." I have not met with this classification in books, but it suggests itself to the practical musician as a true one. It is possible that the "harmony" alluded to by ancient writers may be that which is suggested by the accompanying tones which one hears or imagines when a harmonic *rāga* is performed in tune.

There are disputes as to the number of microtones. Most authorities are agreed on twenty-two.* So far as my own experiments have gone, this seems to agree in the main with the prevailing intonation. I find that twenty-two *śrutis* work in with all those songs I have been able to write down, both Northern and Southern. In these twenty-two are included the mode-notes themselves, excepting in those intervals between mode-notes where we can put thirds of tones. When one wishes to use microtonal embroidery between such intervals, one discards the semitone for the time being. I will sing you these twenty-two microtones, and also a portion of a song with and without them, so that you may hear how they fill in the melody.

[Here followed a scale of microtones ascending and descending and portion of a *kirtanam* in Rāga Kāmbodi, *Mēla* 29, "Koniadina na pai nee."]

Hitherto microtones seem largely to have taken the place of harmony in the East; but in India to-day there is a growing desire for harmony as we conceive of it in the West. There is no doubt, however, that the *wholesale* adoption of Western harmony would be as destructive to Indian music as the wholesale use of *rāga* would be to ours. We musicians of the West should therefore do all we can to prevent the mere imitation of our methods; for some Indians are already beginning to look to us for guidance, and the responsibility will be ours. The best way to convince ourselves of the futility of applying conventional harmony to Indian music is to try to harmonize *rāgas* strictly on Western lines. Yet there is no reason why the principles of consonance should not be combined with those of *rāga*, for many chords are only synthesised *rāgas*. The feeling for chord can indeed easily become appreciation of *rāga*, for fundamentally they are not irreconcilable. This will open a vast field to the musician of the future. Not all *rāgas*, however, could be harmonized, but some of them suggest exquisite combinations. In Māya Mālava Gaula, for instance, we get progressions like this, without taking any notes chromatic to the mode:

Keynote C. (Play over the scale to familiarize yourself with its intervals.)



* In actual musical practice the number is not a matter of importance, where microtones are used as graces. One more or less here and there may render the theorist hot in dispute, but is a matter of complete indifference to the performer!

The subject is too big to enlarge upon here. I have dealt with it, and with microtones, at length, elsewhere. I would note in passing, however, that modulation is foreign to the system of *rāga*, and that in harmonizing *rāga*, to preserve its spirit, we should have to modulate to mode instead of key, whilst notes treated chromatically—chromatically to the mode, I mean—would merely become allusions to other *rāgas*, a thing which is quite possible, especially in the Northern Indian style. Modulation, however, and chromatic notes, have to be very carefully used, since the very existence, or “programme” of the *rāga*, depends upon bringing out its “entity” or characteristic. Again, effects which are quite bare and ugly in purely Western harmonic progressions, become beautiful under *rāga* treatment, where the traditional sustained bare outlines in the accompaniment throw the “programme”—the entity of the *rāga*—into stronger relief. By this I do not mean that we could jangle fifths, for instance, in mere dull repetition, in the pseudo-Oriental way one sometimes hears nowadays in the West; but that *rāga* and the subtle *timbre* of Indian instruments allow of progressions and treatment which in Western music would sound hideous. Played on the pianoforte they are as a rule hideous, and then we condemn the Eastern art! They must be heard on *vinā* or *sarengi*, on *tambura*, *tabla* and *shanaī*—and in just intonation, of course.

A mine of information—or rather of suggestion—exists in the Sanskrit musical treatises. Since a great art has been built upon these ancient theories, might not their revival and study be of some practical value in our own musical education? It does not matter to the enthusiast that he should encounter, among a certain class of modern Indians with whom he may come in contact, half-heartedness about their own culture and an almost general contempt for music as a profession. If he has had the slightest proof of the existence of fine music anywhere, however it may appear to differ from his own, he is bound to labour until he brings it before his fellow-musicians. There is a real need for expert translations of Sanskrit treatises, and I plead here for a widening of our musical horizon, and submit to you that, speaking musically, not merely archæologically, it is worth our while.

I will now give you examples of three favourite types of song—the *bhajan*, the *kirtanam*, and the *varanam*. This *bhajan* is from Benares. Briefly, the *bhajan* is a simple devotional song in Rondo form.

[Example given: Hindi song, “Bâra, Bâra.”]

The *kirtanam* is of more elaborate structure, being in three parts—*pallavi*, *anupallavi*, and *charanam*. We would probably call the second and third “episodes.” The parts are treated with variation, and a kind of subsidiary episode

is sometimes introduced. This last resembles a *tutti* passage in a concerto. In fact, this feeling for *tutti* comes out clearly in various forms, and is most interesting, revealing a perfect mastery of materials. Though often miniature, it is in its own way highly evolved, *i.e.*, from the standpoint of the development of the *rāga* and of rhythms* which have been already enunciated. The *tutti* frequently ends by being joined by the soloist in a glorified recapitulation of the main subject, for all the world like Haydn and Mozart! The way in which the different idioms of the *rāgas* are developed in these episodes proves the songs to be definite artistic creations, and not mere meanderings in sound, as we may be at first inclined to imagine.

I will now give an example of a South Indian *kirtanam*—“Parithānam Ichchithē Pālinthuvēmo,” words and music by Patnam Subramanya Iyer, *tāla* *Ḥhampa*, *Mishra Ḥāti*, *i.e.*, $2+3+2+3=10$. *Mēla* Dhirasankarabharanam, *rāga* Bilahari. The *rāga* is:



[Example given.]

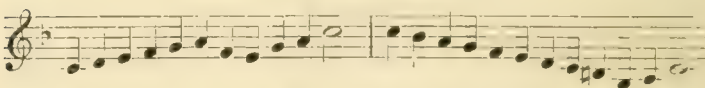
Here is a *kirtanam* in another *rāga*, without a *tutti* passage, by the great Tyagarajayya: *Tāla adi* (or *Triputa*), *Chaturushra Ḥāti*, *i.e.*, $4+2+2=8$. *Mēla* Harikāmbodī, *rāga* Mohanam. The *rāga* is:



[Example given: “Bhava Nutha.”]

Varanam is more elaborate, and is usually treated without variation. I will sing an example, also Southern, in the same *tāla* and *mēla* as the preceding, but in another *rāga* in which an accidental, B \sharp , is allowed:

Rāga Kāmbodī, keynote C.



[A love-song of the South, “Tsalemé,” in which *mēlas* Tōdī, Nattha Bhairavi, and Māya Mālava Gaulā were employed, was next given as a fine example of modulation according to Indian notions. Then a Bengali song, by

* See Shiva and Rhythm, pp. 5, 6. I have analysed these forms in detail elsewhere.

Rabindranath Tagore, "Hridaya Shoshi," in *rāga* Aiman Kalyān, and a religious song, "Thumārī Gêhê," by the same author, as examples of the living tradition in modern times.]

India abounds in folk-songs. Here is a vast field almost unexplored. The characteristic which chiefly distinguishes the Indian folk utterances from ours is the free employment of improvisation in *rāga*. Here we come upon something quite extraordinarily beautiful: the wandering devotee, the man returning home at night from the temple, the woman grinding corn on the doorstep, pour out their souls in bird-like melody, which utterly eludes us as we try to write it down. Such improvisation baffles the chronicler, but it is the soul of Indian music. The people improvise in a somewhat incoherent way; the trained artist does so in forms expanded from the examples you have heard this afternoon, and he is as definite and as conscious in so doing as we are when we write down our ideas.

In earlier times, Muhammadan fanaticism well-nigh destroyed Hindu music; but the Persian culture which the Muhammadans helped to diffuse mingled, as years went on, with that of its Hindu parent,* and both were strengthened and beautified.

[An example of a Northern *thumri* in *rāga* Pilû, "Raghubir thuma ko hai mēri lāj," was given to illustrate this point.]

The Indian artist does not practise six hours a day, unless he wants to—which he seldom does! He prefers the way of meditation, and we must admit that he attains to good results. He goes in for elaborate meditations to gain control of breath, &c. In this connection we discover a fine tradition hidden beneath the ugly modern Indian convention of singing through the nose. In the *Kāthopaniṣad* the verse occurs:

"'Tis neither by up-breath (nor yet) by down-breath
that any mortal doth live. 'Tis by another men live, on
which both these depend."

This other, or etheric breath (the breath of *prāṇa* as the Hindu would perhaps term it), is supposed to be found and used by the Indian singer, and those who have cultivated it say that it resides in the head. Now this seems perhaps to be a clumsy way of putting it; and we have of course no ordinary proof that there exists such a second breath. Yet we occasionally find men singing on and on with almost no change of breath, in a state of semi-ecstasy, and producing a beautiful tone which is scarcely nasal at all. I heard one of these singers in Benares three years ago. From an ordinary technical point of view his performance was inexplicable. Squatting calmly on the floor, and with no apparent effort, he improvised for some three hours, with sustained, inaudible breathing such as might have baffled our Wagnerian artists,

* See S. S. Wilson's "Ariana Antiqua," pp. 121-2, 125

and in passage work which would have taxed a fiddler. His range was immense, some two and a-half octaves; his command of force, from *pianissimo* to *fortissimo*, seemed without limit; and withal, the main quality of his voice was *heavy* baritone! It is of course only a rare artist who can follow the method of the "head-breath"; and all the failures, in their attempts to gain it, get no further than an ugly yawl in their noses. Thus the convention of nasal singing has probably arisen, and the masses now follow it, believing it be their "immemorial tradition." We must condemn it, for it is hideous. But we may also thank the Indian peoples for the tenacity which has preserved to these days the landmarks at least by which we are enabled, if we will, to re-discover their noble ideals.

I hope I have succeeded in convincing you that the study of the Indian viewpoint may be of artistic value to Western musicians. Long as I have spoken, and patiently as you have listened, it has been impossible to give you more than a mere glimpse into a vast subject; but from what you have heard you will perhaps have gathered that our field of harmony is far from exhausted; that the writer of modern "programme" music—even if at times it is grotesque—is reaching out towards musical forms which may lead him suddenly into the archaic theosophic tradition of the Aryan race; that if we can teach much to India, India may, in turn, teach us how to teach; that there may be more things in music than we or our Eastern brothers have dreamed of—things which will only come to birth when the peoples of the East and of the West search for them together; and that our orchestras, to be complete, may still need the tones of the *vini* and *tabla*, and our hearts, to be full, the melodies of the East.



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